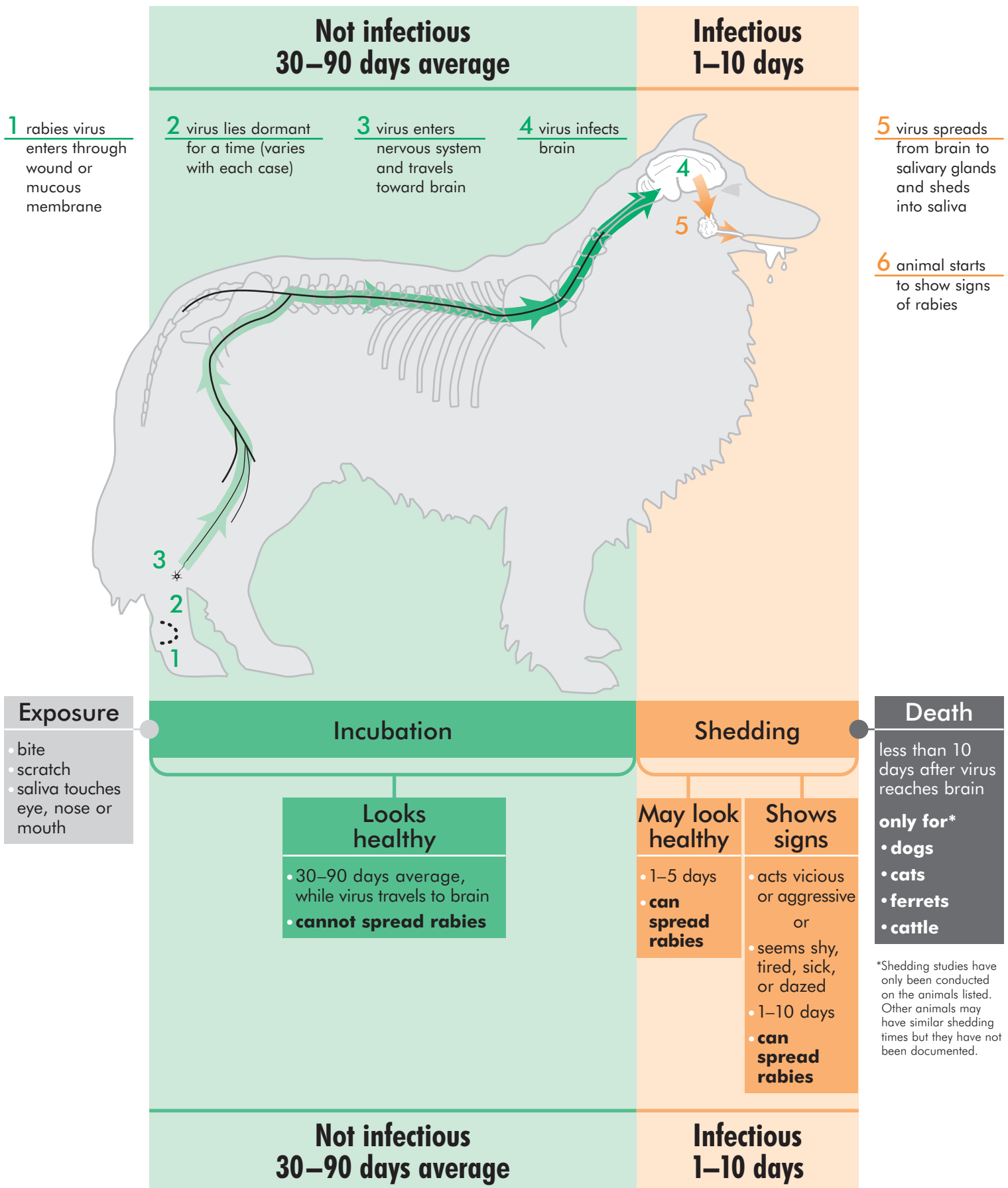


Animal Rabies

Infection and Spread

Rabies is a viral disease that affects mammals. It is an important public health concern in Massachusetts. This handout can help explain how the disease develops in animals, the spread of rabies virus, and the 10-day animal quarantine.





10-day quarantine for dogs, cats, ferrets & cattle*

If one of these animals exposes a person, even if the animal has been vaccinated and always kept indoors, it must be **quarantined**—kept away from people and other animals for 10 days.

If rabies has reached the animal's brain, the virus can spread to the salivary glands. An animal infected with rabies could be shedding virus in its saliva for up to 5 days before showing any signs.

If the animal dies or shows signs that could be rabies during the 10-day quarantine, it should be put down if alive and sent to the State Laboratory Institute for rabies testing.

If tests show that the animal had rabies, the exposed person must be treated** to prevent rabies.

But,
if the animal remains healthy during the 10-day quarantine, it was not shedding rabies virus at the time of exposure. The people exposed will not need treatment, and the animal can be released.

*Quarantine is required by state law. Quarantine of any other domestic animals, such as horses and sheep, must be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Bureau of Animal Health and the Division of Epidemiology and Immunization. A USDA-approved vaccine is available for horses and sheep, but shedding studies have not been done for these or other animals.

**Treatment consists of 5 shots of vaccine in the arm plus 1 shot of immune globulin over the course of a month.

Phone numbers

- **For questions about human exposures**
Division of Epidemiology and Immunization
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
(617) 983-6800
- **For questions about or to report domestic animal or livestock exposures**
The Bureau of Animal Health
Department of Agricultural Resources
(617) 626-1794
- **For questions about ferret and wild animal exposures**
Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement
(617) 626-1591

Web sites

- **Mass. Department of Public Health Rabies Web Site**
<http://www.state.ma.us/dph/cdc/epii/rabies/rabies.htm>
- **CDC Rabies Home Page**
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/>
- **Bureau of Animal Health Rabies Page**
<http://www.state.ma.us/dfa/animalhealth/rabies/index.htm>
- **Mass. Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Rabies Page**
http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw/dfw_rabies.htm

Rabies vaccine & quarantine save lives—animal and human